

Payments have, as a rule, shown very marked improvement over 1898, especially in the latter half of the year. Careful and frequent buying characterizes the trade now, big parcels being the exception, save at remote northern points. Retail grocers now buy little and often.

COST OF ASSESSMENT LIFE ASSURANCE.

Having in our last issue touched upon the expedients to which numerous assessment life concerns have been compelled to resort to prevent collapse, some having amalgamated and some adopted a "graded rate," we may now pursue the enquiry as to what an adequate graded rate would be, since it has been demonstrated so often that they cannot continue at the old assessment rates and pay what they have undertaken to pay their insureds.

What would be an adequate rate, or rather, how greatly the assessments would have to be increased if new blood should cease to come in, can be approximately seen from the experience of one of the most carefully conducted assessment associations that ever existed—the United Brethren Mutual Aid, of Lebanon, Penn. It was for years honestly managed by men of high local repute in the Society of Friends, who constitute a large share of the population about Lebanon. It flourished and grew rapidly until in 1874 it had 7,033 members and suffered very light death losses, and from that year on to its demise in 1896 the following is the lamentable record of its early growth and decline until its final exit. We omit a few years for brevity:—

Year.	Average Membership.	No. of Deaths.	Cost Per \$1,000.
1874.....	7,083	58	\$12 24
1876.....	12,102	135	15 11
1877.....	14,238	243	17 00
1878.....	13,826	256	21 00
1880.....	12,684	308	24 00
1881.....	10,059	296	24 54
1882.....	10,947	325	26 50
1883.....	9,662	272	28 15
1884.....	8,224	312	35 30
1885.....	7,934	266	43 33
1886.....	7,429	287	42 60
1887.....	7,040	303	46 07
1888.....	6,729	352	43 58
1889.....	5,949	253	44 78
1890.....	5,066	277	54 74
1891.....	4,241	183	53 51
1892.....	4,027	193	55 55
1893.....	4,416	194	57 71
1894.....	4,194	183	68 20
1895.....	3,273	134	73 14

In 1896, when total collapse came suddenly, there were still 2,768 elderly United Brethren hanging on. The income in 1895 was reported at \$239,412.69. The income in 1895 was reported at \$239,412.69. But it was not sufficient, though it cost \$80 that year, for each \$1,000 carried. And the 2,768 people, and ten times as many who previously dropped out, lost all the money they paid in for so many long years. The lesson is obvious.

It is worth while to observe that whereas in the third year of this association's existence the deaths were only 1 in 90 of the membership, they had by 1878 run up in number to 1 in 54 and in 1882 to 1 in 34. Gradually but steadily the proportion of deaths to members increased until in 1890 it was as great as 1 in 18 of the members. The steadiness of increase during twenty-two years in cost per \$1,000 from \$12.24 to \$73.14 is a very striking feature.

BOOTS AND SHOES.

The feeling is strong among manufacturers of the necessity of getting better prices for boots and shoes, because of the increased values of all raw materials. The principle has long been admitted by everyone, but at the meetings of Ontario manufacturers held no unanimity could be secured by reason of what appeared to be doubts if not suspicions entertained of one another. After much trouble a scale of discounts and terms was agreed to, but the application of this was prevented by the non-adherence of one man in Montreal several years ago. Another effort in the same direction was made more recently, but it seems with no better result. So long as dealers cannot agree upon a course of action no course can be expected to be carried out.

It is commonly supposed that a merchant will seize opportunities that offer to increase his profits, but singularly enough this is not the case with certain shoe dealers. So long as these had boots and shoes in stock they vied with each other how low they could sell them, even when the advancing prices of leather and findings should have warned them to be prudent. Now, at last, when they have to replenish stocks they find prices advanced and cannot get stock except at an advance. And now all at once they are eager for an agreement to increase prices. The most weighty factor against the consummation of such an agreement is the fact that houses are doubtful if the agreement, when made, would be kept. Meanwhile the advance in leather has to be reckoned with, and the people who are so foolish as to give away their legitimate profits by means of long terms or excessive discounts must be content with the evil reputation of demoralizing the trade.

There is no reason but the folly of certain dealers why the season of 1899 should not have been as prosperous in this trade as in others. Hardware people and dry goods people have made money by the rise in values; other merchandise has benefited its possessors by increase in value. How irrational then for boot and shoe dealers to rob themselves and the trade generally of a legitimate source of profit.

ONTARIO'S AGRICULTURAL PROGRESS.

A summary of the work of the Ontario Bureau of Industries for the year 1898 has appeared in printed form. It contains matter much of which has already appeared in the periodical bulletins of the Bureau. There are some totals, however, which appear in this report for the first time—among them those referring to the increase of cheese factories and creameries. It is now learned that the number of creameries operated in Ontario was reported as 282, of which 93 furnished reports, on which an estimate of the total production is based. This gives the output of creamery butter as 9,008,992 pounds, being 1,300,727 pounds in excess of the product of 214 creameries in 1897. The growth of the industry within the last few years is shown by a comparison of these figures with those for 1892, when the estimated output of 74 creameries was 2,707,570 pounds. The creamery patrons in 1898 received \$1,294,220 for milk or cream supplied, being 60.6 cents per one hundred pounds of milk. Great quantities of dairy butter are also produced on Ontario farms, whose quality, though improved from that of former years, is not such generally as to give satisfaction abroad. Therefore, the success of the attempt to furnish butter to any considerable extent for the British market depends upon the development of our creamery system. Export figures at Montreal and Quebec, such as we have often furnished, show how steadily the butter of Ontario, and of Quebec as well, is finding increased market in the United Kingdom.

It is known to Canadians as a rule that our cheese is not strange to the British Islanders. Indeed it is the product whose export overshadows every other in the list of our farm products. The statistics of Ontario for 1898 as to cheese factories show that there were 1,187 in operation, a net increase of 26. Owing, however, to the increased attention devoted to butter-making, there was no increase, but a decrease in the output, which amounted to 128,116,924 pounds, as compared with 137,362,916 pounds in 1897. The value of the product was \$10,252,240, but the price dropped half a cent a pound, so that the patrons received for milk \$8,417,535 as compared with \$9,709,004 in 1897.